

# Annexation to Tumwater

## An Informational Brochure



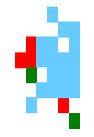
Tumwater City Hall

C i t y o f T u m w a t e r



Washington's  
First  
Community

Tel: (360) 754-4180



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What exactly is “annexation”?

Annexation is simply the process of expanding the City limits to include properties currently outside the City.

### What are the typical reasons someone would ask for their property to be annexed to Tumwater?

1. Better access to elected officials.
2. A smaller and more responsive local government.
3. A highly rated fire department
4. More police officers per citizen as compared to the County

### How is an annexation done?

The most common method used is the Petition Method of Annexation. It starts with the property owner and is based on the tax assessed value of property. Any area that is to be annexed must have property owners representing at least 60% of the tax assessed value of the area requesting annexation. A rough analogy would be that a property owner “votes” with their tax assessed value. A super majority (60%) in favor of annexation is required for the annexation to be successful.

For annexation laws see RCW 35A.14.120. For information on tax assessed values see either the Thurston County Geodata Center ([geodata.org](http://geodata.org)) or the Thurston County Assessors Office web page.

### The Urban Growth Area has been discussed a lot over the years, what exactly is it?

The urban growth area is the area surrounding the City where urban development is to occur. This is to contain growth and prevent development from sprawling into the rural areas of the County. The boundaries of the urban growth area were set in 1983 and reaffirmed in the early 1990s through a public process that involved the citizens and property owners of both Tumwater and Thurston County. The boundaries of the Tumwater urban growth area stretch from Black Lake to the Deschutes River and down to the vicinity of 93rd Avenue.

### What about zoning?

Zoning stays the same. The County has already adopted the City’s zoning for the entire urban growth area.

### If an annexation is denied does that stop development?

Denial of an annexation does not affect whether or not a development can continue. In the event of a denial a developer will be required to sign an annexation agreement for access to City water or sewer.



*Mt. Rainier from Overlook Point Park on Tumwater Hill (March 2006)*



### What about taxes?

Property taxes are about the same. A 2014 analysis of property tax rates showed that an average homeowner in the East Olympia/Munn Lake fire districts would pay roughly \$13 more per year after annexation. However, the City does have utility and B&O taxes so business and large consumers of electricity/gas would be affected differently.



### What about homeowners insurance?

In most instances, homeowners insurance rates have been observed to stay the same or decrease slightly. A homeowner's insurance policy is partially based on the rating of the fire district/department in which the home is located. The Tumwater Fire Department has a better rating than any of the surrounding fire districts. A better rating can result in lower insurance premiums. Rates vary between companies and individual insurance plans so check with your insurance agent to determine the effect on your home owners insurance premiums.

Note: The Washington Survey and Ratings Bureau upgraded Tumwater's rating from a 5 to a 4 in 2014.



### What about auto insurance?

No effects have been reported or observed. Most insurance companies base auto insurance rates on zip codes and an individual's driving record, not city limit boundaries.



### What about zip codes?

Zip codes are not affected by annexation.



### What about schools?

There is no effect on schools. School district boundaries are independent of city boundaries.



### What about voting? Can I still vote for County Commissioners?

You can still vote for the Thurston County Commissioners even if you are annexed. You will be also be able to vote in the elections for the seven Tumwater City Council positions and the Tumwater Mayor.



### What's this about better access to local elected officials?

In Tumwater there are eight elected officials, including the Mayor and seven council members, for 18,300 residents. This means there is an elected official for approximately every 2,300 residents in Tumwater. In contrast, there are three County Commissioners for 260,100 County residents. That means there are 86,000 people vying for each County Commissioner's attention.



### Can I help guide local decisions?

Yes. You would be eligible to be on several Tumwater boards and commissions including the Planning Commission, the Parks Board, the Tree Board, the Library Board, and the Historic Commission.



### My well water is great and I have a fairly new septic system. Am I required to hook up to city water and sewer?

You can continue to use your well and septic system after annexation. Annexation does not trigger any hookup requirements. In the event your well or septic system does fail, being part of the city may allow you to connect to city water or sewer as necessary.



### What about my livestock?

No problem. You can keep your farm animals, they will be "grandfathered." In fact, certain livestock are actually allowed in some zoning districts under the term "agriculture."



### Can I burn my tree limbs and yard debris if I am annexed?

Out door burning is not affected by annexation. State law has prohibited out door burning in urban growth areas and cities since 2007.

For more information on burn bans contact the Olympic Region Clean Air Agency. <http://www.orcaa.org/>



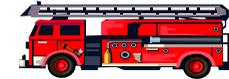
### Will the City pay the electric bill for the street lights in my neighborhood?

The City will take responsibility for the maintenance and electricity costs for County owned streetlights that are in the right-of-way and are up to current City standards.



### How would police services be different?

Tumwater has more than twice as many officers per thousand residents than Thurston County. The City of Tumwater provides 1.4 commissioned officers per thousand residents. Thurston County provides 0.6 commissioned officers per thousand residents. (Sources: Tumwater Police Dept. and [Crime in Washington: 2012 Annual Report](#), Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs)



### How would fire services be different?

The Tumwater Fire Department would assume primary fire protection and emergency responder duties. The City provides a career staff, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The existing mutual response agreement with neighboring fire districts would remain in effect and whoever is closest and available would respond to an emergency first, followed up by the primary service provider.

### Need more information about annexation?

Contact the Tumwater Community Development Department at 754-4180.

Disclaimer: The information contained within this brochure was obtained and compiled through staff research. The information is accurate to the best of our knowledge, however, circumstances and situations can vary between individuals which can affect the impacts of annexation discussed within this brochure. We encourage citizens to get involved and research the facts for themselves. Therefore the City of Tumwater does not warrant, guarantee, or accept any liability for the accuracy, precision, or completeness of any information show herein or for any inferences made herefrom.  
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City of Tumwater  
Community Development Department  
555 Israel Road SW  
Phone: (360) 754-4180  
Fax: (360) 754-4126  
Email: [cdd@ci.tumwater.wa.us](mailto:cdd@ci.tumwater.wa.us)  
[www.ci.tumwater.wa.us/Annexations.htm](http://www.ci.tumwater.wa.us/Annexations.htm)